

MUTUAL AID MONTHLY

A Production of Des Moines Mutual Aid

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What Are The Police?

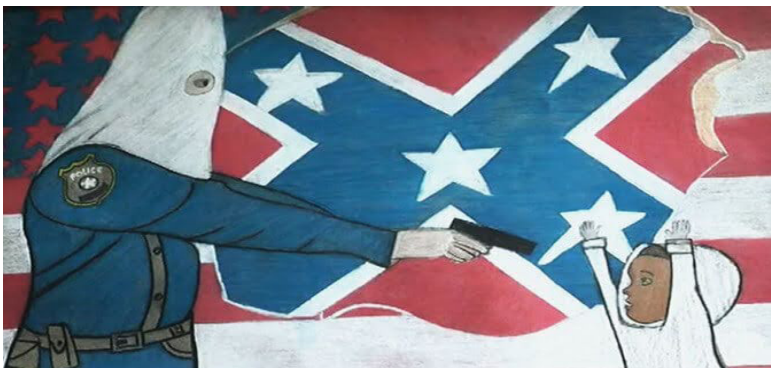
Terror is a tool used by the ruling class

Comrade Crixus

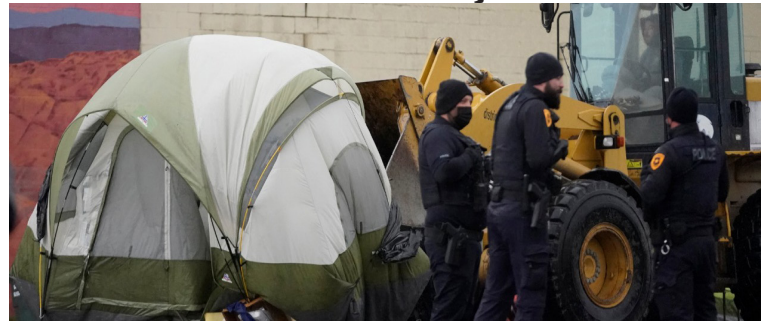
Terror is a political weapon. It can serve more than those with “legitimate” political power, but is used most often by those who hold power in the present state of things. Capitalism requires unemployment, cheap labor, a monopoly over the machines necessary to reproduce daily life, and other frequent tragedies. They remain distant from the consequences of their luxury because they have a well armed horde of eager enforcers: the police. If not for these enforcers, they would have no backstop protecting them against the masses whose immiseration is the product of their luxury.

Police violence, even so called “excesses”, serve the interests of those who own our circumstances of life. “Indirect” violence in the form of eviction, arresting desperate thieves, criminalizing addiction, etc., all exist to protect private property and serve to normalize a hopeless lack of power. More direct violence in the form of lynchings, beatings, targeted harassment campaigns, the purposeful destruction of truces between street gangs (as practiced by the LAPD) are not just examples of “bad police”. But it should be described in more specific terms than “capitalism functioning as it must”.

This violence is political. The terror these patterns of violence instill in the masses is to intimidate the populace into docility. Every class society features the repression of the lower classes. And the United States is without question a class society. It is the struggle between rich and poor brought to your car window, smashing your door down, murdering our children, forcing you onto the street. Like Al Qaeda and the Einsatzgruppen, they seek to harm masses of people in the service of reactionary politics. When one asks the question “what are the police?,” the most politically sound answer is to say that “they are agents of terror”.



- Mutual Aid Monthly Exclusive -



Window to Appeal Camp Evictions to be Cut

Change means belongings will be removed faster

Comrade Ricky P

The City of Des Moines’ Department of Neighborhood Services is plotting to make it easier for the city to bulldoze the living quarters of the houseless. The planned policy change has not yet been announced, but has leaked from inside sources and has been independently verified by the Monthly.

Under current rules, the city posts eviction (officially, “encroachment”) notices near camps they want to raise two weeks before the eviction date, and campers are given 10 days from the posting date to submit an appeal. The anticipated city policy change would reduce both the appeal deadline and eviction date to 3 days from the posting. That is, campers would have 72 hours to appeal before the city’s bulldozers show up. Currently, evictions cannot take place until an appeal hearing has been held. This process takes several weeks, so appealing these evictions/encroachment enforcements is a delaying tactic that buys time for campers to move their belongings.

Shortening the window to appeal evictions has the obvious effect of speeding up the eviction process and making it more difficult for campers to submit appeals. Campers who have to go to the hospital for a few days, visit a friend, or take advantage of the shelter’s winter amnesty (which the City proudly touts whenever it gets too cold out) could return to their camps to find that their camp has been leveled.

This move will strip away the veneer of legitimacy which the appeals process granted to the City’s pursuit of real estate and developer interests at the expense of the working poor. Because the City is able to change its own rules on appeals at will, it is unlikely that legal challenges to the change will be successful. More militant resistance will be required.

Become The Spider

Strategic intervention must replace symbolic resistance

Jenots Tumsa

Recently my car smells very bad, unbearable even. I've probably driven less because of it, and I've wasted hours trying to figure out what is going on and what to do about it. I've spent probably 50 bucks and many hours dealing with it. Most likely what happened is this: a spider crawled up my AC drain hose, and died there. Now the condensation doesn't come out, and probably created mold.

This spider, impressively, struck at the right place at the right time. It could have been crushed underfoot, mowed down by a particularly heavy raindrop, or been eaten by a bird. Instead the stars aligned for chaos and that spider was the subjective factor in that, just like we describe "the party" being the subjective factor in the world's great events. Whatever little agency spiders can have has resulted in this one punching way above its weight class.

Workers, on the other hand, get up at the ass crack of dawn every single day to make their bosses richer. They vote for some vile demon who openly hates them, until for some a (low-wattage) lightbulb goes off and they become leftists. Now instead of voting, they are "class conscious". They use this so-called consciousness to engage in activity that is no more productive of a new world than what they were doing before they were leftists, but now they can live with themselves again. It is no skin off capital's back. Then, eventually they die.

Spare yourself a life of humiliation: each of us must find a way to be the spider.



This flyer is a production of Des Moines Mutual Aid, which is a local network of anarchists, communists, and socialists building community autonomy from capitalism and the state. Below are our points of unity - basically, the political and social outlook which binds us together.

0. We believe in working shoulder to shoulder and standing in solidarity with all oppressed communities. We ourselves are oppressed, and our mutual aid work is a fight for our collective liberation. We do not believe in a top-down model of charity. Instead, we contrast our efforts at horizontal mutual aid, the fostering of mutually beneficial relationships and communities, to dehumanizing and colonizing charity.

1. We believe in community autonomy. We believe that the communities we live and organize in have been largely excluded from state social services, but intensely surveilled and policed by the state repressive apparatus. Capitalism is fundamentally unable to meet people's needs. We want to build self-sustaining communities that are independent of the capitalist state, both materially and ideologically, and can resist its repression.

2. We are police and prison abolitionists. Abolition and the mutual aid that we practice are inextricably linked. We don't rely on capitalist institutions or the police to do our work. We believe in building strong and resilient communities which make police obsolete, including community systems of accountability and crisis intervention.

3. We work to raise the political consciousness of our communities. Part of political education is connecting people's lived experiences to a broader political perspective. Another component is working to ensure that people can meet their basic needs. It is difficult to organize for future liberation when someone is entrenched in day-to-day struggle.

4. We have open disagreements with each other about ideas and practices. We believe there is no formula for resolving our ideological differences other than working towards our common aims, engaging with each other in a comradely manner, and respecting one another, whether or not we can hash out disagreements in the process.

If you want to get involved, let a volunteer know. For more information, including how to donate, visit <https://iowamutualaid.org/>.